

Learning to Be a LEADER



Leadership can be an important part of your everyday life.

When the Savior was on the earth, He taught His Apostles about leadership and service:

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

“These things I command you, that ye love one another” (John 15:16–17).

After His ascension into heaven, His disciples became great leaders and built up the Church in their day.

In our day we are called on to be leaders and to beckon others to follow Jesus’s teachings. You may be a leader in your ward or branch or among your group of friends. Young men and young women in a Washington stake recently learned to refine their leadership skills by planning a week-long camp for priests and Laurels. Their stake leaders first taught them about commitment, integrity, and what it means to be a leader. Then they stepped back and let the youth take charge.

The youth lived up to the responsibility and learned important principles in the

process—principles *you* can use in your wards and communities. For example, Neal M. says, “I learned to not just pay attention to how things are done but to go to individuals and help them in whatever way they need.”

Ali S. says she learned to trust in the Lord. “There were so many times when I didn’t know what to do. I would open up the scriptures and find comfort. Two scriptures that really helped were Doctrine and Covenants 64, verses 29 and 33:

“Wherefore, as ye are agents, ye are on the Lord’s errand; and whatever ye do according to the will of the Lord is the Lord’s business. . . .

“Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.”

Listening to the Spirit

Leadership involves delegation, or including others. One of the responsibilities for the youth committee in Washington was to choose “tent leaders” to lead small groups at the camp. Ali remembers this experience as a powerful one: “We had a meeting, and we



did a lot of praying together and thinking, and we really tried to invite the Spirit to be with us and to guide us.”

Kramer G., one of the tent leaders, says, “The young men in my tent taught me to persevere and to lead by example. I learned I really could be a leader.” That lesson can come to you when you’re willing to be a leader, even if you don’t think you can do it. Ashley S., who was also a tent leader, says she and a coleader learned that they could rely on each other. “I learned it is important to connect with others in order to earn their trust.”

Giving Service

The youth planned camp to include service projects, a testimony meeting, and activities designed to build spiritual strength and group unity—important things for leading any group, class, or quorum. For example, the youth replaced worn-out picnic tables at the camp so the young men and young women could work and serve together. Stephanie T. learned that leadership includes helping others use and develop their talents: “We put together new tables without power tools. We learned to let the ones with know-how lead and to



BUILD LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership takes place in day-to-day life in addition to Church callings. You'll find opportunities to lead in your family, group of friends, school, community, and ward or branch. So how do you learn to lead with confidence? A good place to start is with the teachings in the scriptures.

- Prepare yourself through study, prayer, and faith (see D&C 88:118–19).
- Seek the will of the Lord. When Jesus was on earth, He sought to know what His Father in Heaven wanted, and then He did as He was asked (see John 7:16–18).
- Love those you lead (see John 15:10–12).
- True leadership is about service. Remember the example of King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 2:11–19).
- Review the traits of leadership found in Doctrine and Covenants 121:39–45.
- Remember Paul's counsel to Timothy (see 1 Timothy 4:12–16). President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, explains: "Paul gave good counsel for all of us. Don't worry about how inexperienced you are or think you are, but think about what, with the Lord's help, you can become" ("Preparation in the Priesthood: 'I Need Your Help,'" *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 58).

include the others by having them measure and then stain the tables. It was a humbling experience and changed me for the better.”

Christlike leadership includes helping everyone feel welcome. “A few kids were unhappy about being grouped with people they didn’t know,” Neal says. “When we had them participate in the games and projects, they became involved. Now we see each other at stake activities and enjoy being together.” Stephanie agrees: “We go to different high schools, but because of the camp, we now know and interact with others whom we hadn’t met before.”

Building Bonds of Unity and Friendship

The youth also used camp activities to let the participants share meaningful experiences with one another. Ariel says, “I think we all understood better the challenges others are going through. So it’s not ‘Poor me—I’m all alone’ anymore. We gained strength from the friendships we made there.”

Dominic tells of the unity that developed as he helped lead bonding experiences at the camp: “On the first night, we were supposed to have a testimony meeting in our small groups. I had to convince the young men in my group to come. We did some fun getting-acquainted activities first. None of us knew one another. But when we began bearing our testimonies, we started realizing that every one of us had things in common. Sharing testimonies made us stronger individually and as a group. The next day we walked together, laughing and talking, and we are still close to each other.”

Stephanie says she learned to put faith in the Lord. “I had three girls in my tent whom I didn’t know very well, and I had to dig deep to find ways to reach them. One of the girls was just coming back to activity in the Church, so I adjusted our spiritual thoughts to meet her needs. The experience helped her decide to continue going to church. Another girl didn’t want to be there at first, so I had her help me and made her feel welcome. At the end of the

week she thanked me. That made it all worth it.” As you lead, you can work to help others feel needed and important.

Lessons Learned

The lessons from the camp have stayed with the youth and influenced their lives.

Ariel says, “I learned a lot about patience and encouraging others to have fun and be involved. At that time I was feeling impatient with others, so encouraging them was challenging. I learned so much, and it worked out well.”

Dominic appreciates his youth leaders more because of the experience. “They do everything they can to build a bond between us. They are there to help. You know that they genuinely care about you.” As a youth leader, you can look to your leaders for help and direction.

Ali puts it this way: “Every moment of trouble and worry was so worth it as long as the others got something out of it. I wanted them to grow and have the best time with that foundation that we are going to need. One reason why Heavenly Father can love us all so much is because He serves us all so much.” These youth in Washington learned that leadership does involve service and love—just as Jesus taught through His ministry and service. **NE**

THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP AND UNITY

Here are several lessons the youth learned about leadership and unity:

“Trust in the Lord. I learned that He is in charge, and I can trust Him. He won’t let me down if I’m doing my best to do His will.” —Ali



“Trust leaders. Know who they are and why they do what they do to lead us on the right path.” —Ashley



“Don’t give up. Keep encouraging others, persevere, and lead by example.” —Kramer



“We all have different talents, and when we work together we can accomplish amazing things.” —Stephanie



“We gain strength in dealing with challenges when we share experiences and build friendships with others.” —Ariel



“I learned a lot about responsibility—not just about how things are done but about helping individuals. The individual touch is an important part of leadership.” —Neal



“You have to have a structure to hold you up, and that’s a function of the family. Quorum members can also give much-needed support during hard times.” —Dominic

